

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /069 W

-----140316Z 036664 /62

P 140202Z JAN 77

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7074

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 96

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: INFORMATION DEPARTMENT DENIALS CONCERNING TENG, WU TEH,
CHEN HSI-LIEN, LI TE-SHENG, CHOU PHOTO EXHIBITION

REFS: (A) PEKING 26 (B) PEKING 60

1. FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT FOREIGN PRESS
LIAISON OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN BOMBARDED WITH QUESTIONS BY
RESIDENT JOURNALISTS CONCERNING AUTHENTICITY OF POSTER
CHARGES AND RELATED QUESTIONS. FOLLOWING PERIOD OF
HIGH TENSION JANUARY 8-9 DURING WHICH OFFICIALS MERELY
"TOOK QUESTIONS" OR ABSENTED THEMSELVES FROM THEIR DESKS,
THEY HAVE BEGUN TO ISSUE A STREAM OF DENIALS, WHICH FOR
THE RECORD ARE RECORDED BELOW.

2. REPORT OF LI TE-SHENG'S ARREST WAS BRANDED A "VICIOUS
FABRICATION" (REF A). AS OF JANUARY 13, BOTH WU TEH
AND CHEN HSI-LIEN WERE SAID TO BE "AT THEIR POSTS."
AN INFORMATION DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL WAS SAID TO "ROAR
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WITH LAUGHTER" WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT JANUARY 13
PRESS REPORTS OUT OF HONG KONG AND TAIPEI STATING
THAT TENG WAS ALREADY PREMIER AND/OR WORKING AT THE
STATE COUNCIL; WITHIN THE HOUR THAT OFFICIAL ADVISED
THAT "COMRADE HUA KUO-FENG IS THE PREMIER." (TWO
DAYS EARLIER, HOWEVER, AT A TIME OF SOME UNCERTAINTY,
AN OFFICIAL DODGED A QUERY ON TENG WITH THE PHRASE

"I'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY AT THE MOMENT," EMPHASIZING
THE FINAL THREE WORDS.)

3. ASKED ABOUT THE POSTER LAMENTING THE FAILURE OF
THE CHOU PHOTO EXHIBITION TO OPEN ON SCHEDULE (REF B).
THE INFORMATION DEPARTMENT EXPRESSED INCREDULITY.
THE OFFICIAL PHONED BACK A SHORT TIME LATER TO ADVISE
THAT THE EXHIBITION HAD IN FACT OPENED ON SCHEDULE
TO LARGE CROWDS. ALMOST IMPLORINGLY, HE ASKED IF
THE JOURNALISTS WISHED TICKETS. THE JOURNALIST ACCEPTED
THE OFFER, VISITED THE EXHIBITION ON THE MORNING OF
JANUARY 13, AND TOLD USLO OFFICER THAT HE COULD FIND
NO PHOTOS OF TENG.

4. INFORMATION DEPARTMENT'S SUDDEN OFFER A WEEK AGO
TO SPONSOR TRIP BY RESIDENT JOURNALISTS TO NANKING,
SHANGHAI AND HANGCHOW COMMENCING JANUARY 12 WAS
SPURNED BY SIGNIFICATN NUMBERS. EASTERN EUROPEAN
JOURNALISTS ALMOST TO THE MAN ACCEPTED THE OFFER,
BUT WESTERN JOURNALISTS, SENSING A DESIRE TO GET
THEM AWAY FROM THE SIGNIFICANT ACTION, CHOSE TO
STAY IN PEKING.
GATES

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